FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ON CROWN LAND IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

A PUBLIC DISCUSSION PAPER

Province of
British Columbia

February 1990

BC Lands

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INVITATION TO RESPOND

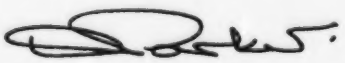
In June 1989, the Ministry of Crown Lands initiated a review of the government's longstanding program for providing vacant Crown land for agricultural development. Mr. David Gillespie was appointed as Commissioner of the Inquiry.

Mr. Gillespie consulted extensively with the public and government agencies throughout the summer of 1989, and delivered his report to me in November. His report contains numerous recommendations for improving the existing government program for agricultural development of Crown land.

Crown Lands has worked with the Ministries of Agriculture and Fisheries, Forests, and Environment to address Mr. Gillespie's recommendations. This Discussion Paper represents government's response to the recommendations, and proposes directions for revising government policy for agricultural development on Crown land.

British Columbians have a strong interest in the natural resource heritage of this province. As the Minister of Crown Lands, I am committed to involving the public in decisions that affect the management of Crown lands.

As part of this commitment, I am seeking public comment on the directions proposed in this Discussion Paper. Your views are both welcomed and necessary for developing a new provincial policy. Your contribution in this process will be very much appreciated.



The Honourable Dave Parker
Minister of Crown Lands

February 1990.

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INTRODUCTION

The Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper is the provincial government's response to a report entitled, "Agricultural Development on Crown Land in British Columbia - A Review", prepared in November 1989 by Mr. David Gillespie at the request of the Minister of Crown Lands. Mr. Gillespie's report contains recommendations to improve existing policies and procedures that govern the allocation of Crown land for agricultural development in British Columbia. The Report of the Inquiry is available from the Ministry of Crown Lands regional offices listed in Appendix I, or by contacting the Land Policy Branch, Ministry of Crown Lands, 4000 Seymour Place, Victoria, British Columbia, V8V 1X5. Telephone: (604) 387-1800.

Each of Mr. Gillespie's recommendations has been carefully considered. The government accepts all but one of these recommendations and, as the next step, commits to develop detailed policies and procedures to guide the future allocation of Crown land for agricultural development. As an essential part of this process, the government wishes to advise the public of the proposed directions as contained in this Discussion Paper. Individuals and organizations are invited to provide their comments to help guide the development of new policies and procedures.

The target for a new policy is the Summer 1990. In order that public input may be adequately considered in the final policy decisions, all written comments should be provided to the following address before April 30, 1990.

Agricultural Development on Crown Land
c/o Land Policy Branch
Ministry of Crown Lands
4000 Seymour Place, Victoria, B.C. V8V 1X5

The Major Issues

For the past twenty-five years Crown land has been provided for agricultural use in British Columbia through a "lease-develop purchase" program. Under this program, Crown land is leased for a specified time period and, during that period, a prescribed amount of cultivation must occur on the land before the leaseholder qualifies to purchase the land. The agricultural lease program has operated primarily in the northern interior areas of British Columbia, and has mainly been directed towards the development of beef, hay and grain farms.

6500 leases comprising approximately 650,000 hectares of Crown land have been issued over the life of the program. Currently, there are about 1400 leases in existence, covering roughly 140,000 hectares of Crown land.

Although this represents a relatively small proportion of British Columbia's considerable land area (which is almost 92 million hectares, of which 91 percent is provincial Crown land), the characteristics of the land that make it desirable for agriculture also make it highly valuable for other uses. Demands on the Crown land base for timber production, grazing, public recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, watershed protection, etc. are most intensively felt on those particular Crown lands that are also suitable for agriculture. As a result, conflicting views on the appropriate use of these Crown lands sectors, have risen dramatically in recent years.

Another major concern with the agricultural lease program has been the increasing number of complaints about unfair and inconsistent administration of the program. The largest single issue relating to the program, however, is the question of whether it is effective in accomplishing program goals. In recent times, there has been increasing evidence to suggest that speculation in Crown timber has been a primary reason for acquiring agricultural leases and that, in many cases, the actual interest in using the land for farm development has been secondary.

The increasing number and intensity of these issues prompted the government to appoint an independent Commission of Inquiry into the Crown Land Agricultural Lease Program.

The Gillespie Inquiry: Public Involvement

Mr. David Gillespie, a Kamloops lawyer with extensive experience in land related matters, was appointed in June 1989 as Commissioner of Inquiry into Agricultural Development on Crown Land in British Columbia. Mr. Gillespie was asked by the government to:

1. Identify issues associated with existing agricultural development on Crown land;
2. Determine if additional Crown land should be made available for agricultural development; and if so,
3. Identify the most effective methods for agricultural Crown land disposition.

In conducting the Inquiry, Mr. Gillespie consulted with a wide range of individuals and organizations with an interest in the program. Twelve public meetings were held throughout the northern interior area of the province, and numerous meetings were held with government agencies involved in implementing resource management programs on Crown land. Close to 200 verbal and written briefs were submitted to the Inquiry. Mr. Gillespie also had the opportunity to personally view all major land areas in the northern interior where the agricultural lease program has been implemented.

Mr. Gillespie submitted his report to the Minister of Crown Lands in November 1989. His report is comprehensive, containing general and specific recommendations to government on how to improve the existing program. The following sections of this Discussion Paper describe Mr. Gillespie's recommendations and provide government's response, together with an outline of the policies and actions that government proposes to undertake.

GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GILLESPIE INQUIRY

GENERAL FINDINGS

Although the agricultural lease program has enabled the development of many good and productive farms, the program has been abused significantly by individuals seeking profits from Crown timber. The result of this practice has been widespread logging and under-development of the lands for agricultural purposes. This is inconsistent with the underlying intent of the program. Insufficient agricultural development has left large land areas in an unproductive state. This has resulted in lost opportunities for other legitimate users of the Crown land resource. Crown lands have been provided for agricultural development without adequate justification that the lands can be successfully converted to agricultural use from an economic point-of-view. The problems are significant enough to warrant major changes to the agricultural lease program.

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

1. NARROW ACCESS TO EXISTING FARMERS

The program should be changed to focus on providing Crown land to support the expansion of existing farms only, as a means of improving their viability. Although there is a strong demand from existing farmers to acquire Crown land under the agricultural lease program for grazing and small scale forestry purposes, the program should maintain and strengthen its focus on only providing Crown land for agricultural cultivation.

2. NO MAJOR ALLOCATIONS WITHOUT A PROVINCIAL STRATEGY

No further widespread allocation of Crown land for agriculture should occur until there is justification of the need to do so in the context of a provincial strategy for agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries should take the lead in defining such a strategy.

3. INTENSIFIED USE OF UNDEVELOPED PRIVATE AGRICULTURAL LANDS

There are already substantial areas of undeveloped farmland in private hands that should be placed into farm production before any further extensive areas of Crown land are allocated for agricultural purposes.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO GENERAL FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the past, agricultural leases have been allocated to support regional economic development and to promote the goal of increased food self-sufficiency in British Columbia. To a large degree, the Agricultural Crown Land Lease Program has successfully helped to achieve those aims. In more recent years, however, the specific contribution of the program to these broader goals has become less evident. This reflects the simple fact that the most productive lands for agriculture are already in private hands. Also, at this time, the current economics of northern interior farming make it more difficult to justify the further widespread allocation of Crown land for agriculture. These facts, combined with the general need for government to consciously examine and evaluate resource management in terms of sustainable development, leads the government to agree with these general findings and recommendations of the Gillespie Inquiry.

The current agricultural Crown land policy for the southern regions of B.C. is to provide Crown land on a direct sale basis, at market value, as opposed to a lease-develop-purchase agreement. This policy reflects the limited availability of uncommitted, arable Crown land in these regions, and also acknowledges the fact that most applications for agricultural Crown land in these areas are already for purposes of existing farm expansion. Government proposes retaining the existing direct sale policy for the southern regions of B.C., subject to the eligibility and land development requirements identified in this Discussion Paper, as well as subject to any existing leasing commitments with farmers.

PROPOSED POLICY AND ACTIONS

CROWN LAND TO SUPPORT EXISTING FARMS

Crown land for agricultural settlement in British Columbia will be limited to land to support the improved economic viability of existing farms. Crown lands for this purpose will continue to be provided on a lease-develop-purchase basis in the northern interior regions of B.C., and on a direct sale basis in southern B.C. regions.

DEVELOP 'COMMODITY STRATEGIES'

The question of whether or not further allocation of Crown land for agricultural settlement should occur in British Columbia, (beyond the provision of Crown land for existing farm expansion), will be considered by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in the development of "commodity strategies" for the agricultural products grown on northern interior farms.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will determine the appropriate timing for the preparation of commodity strategies and will undertake them accordingly. If the strategies justify that further Crown land is required to meet goals identified for northern interior agriculture, then Crown lands that have already been designated for agricultural development through former inter-agency planning processes will be considered for marketing for agricultural development, consistent with the strategies. If the strategies justify the need to release additional Crown lands that have not already been designated for agricultural development, then appropriate inter-agency planning studies will be undertaken to identify whether or not suitable Crown lands are available for this purpose.

HONOUR EXISTING LEASES

The Ministry of Crown Lands will honour all existing agricultural leases on Crown land and will administer those leases in full compliance with the terms and conditions contained in the individual lease agreements.

MINISTRY OF FORESTS TO GUIDE RANGE AND WOODLOT PROGRAMS

The Ministry of Forests will continue to consult with the agricultural industry in the review and development of modified programs and policies for range management and small scale forestry. In this regard, the Ministry of Forests has recently completed range and woodlot program reviews, both with considerable public involvement. Specifically, the woodlot program is being expanded as a result of this process.

SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GILLESPIE INQUIRY

RECOMMENDATION #1

NARROW THE SCOPE OF THE AGRICULTURAL LEASE PROGRAM

Deciding Who Can Acquire an Agricultural Lease

To implement the general recommendations of the Inquiry, new agricultural leases should be limited to existing farmers with a demonstrated need for farm expansion onto Crown land. An existing farmer should be defined as an individual or farm corporation that:

- owns at least 200 acres of land that is in active cultivated production, and not more than 40 acres that is not in active cultivated production; and
- has prepared a farm development plan which, among other things, justifies the need for farm expansion.

The Ministry of Crown Lands and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries should work together to develop a standardized format and outline for farm development plans.

Changes to the Definition of Suitable Crown Lands for Agriculture

There should be limitations governing which Crown lands an existing farmer can expand onto, as follows:

- there should be a maximum limit of 320 acres per lease with only one lease permitted at a time;
- the Crown land under application should be located adjacent to, or within five road miles of, the applicant's existing farm unit; and
- at least 70% of the land area under application must be arable. Arable should be defined as land with agricultural capability of Canada Land Inventory Class 4 or better; or Class 5, with the overriding limitation that a Crown land application should not result in more than 50% of the applicant's total farm unit being comprised of land that is Class 5 or poorer.

Requirements to Purchase a Lease

In order for an agricultural leaseholder to qualify to purchase the land that he has been leasing:

- 70% of the arable land area will have been placed into active agricultural cultivation (which is defined as preparing and actually seeding the land); and
- the legal title of the lease land will be bound (or consolidated) to the title of the existing farm holding, in order to prevent the separate sale of the parcels at a later date, and thus the fragmentation of the total farm unit.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

These recommendations are intended to promote the creation of viable farm units, of sufficient size to operate economically. They also attempt to ensure that Crown land is not allocated for farm expansion unless it is clearly needed for that purpose.

The government endorses these recommendations, subject to public input received through this Discussion Paper, and advice received from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Proposed Policy and Actions

These recommendations will be incorporated into a detailed policy statement. In developing this policy, the Ministry of Crown Lands will consider public input received in response to this Discussion Paper, and will have discussions with the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and appropriate representatives of the agricultural industry.

The new policy will be implemented by the Summer of 1990. The Ministry of Crown Lands will monitor the effects of the policy to determine whether or not there should be some later policy adjustments.

Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries staff in the northern interior regions will be available to provide general advice to existing farmers on options for improving farm viability. Farmers will, however, be expected to use their own resources for detailed farm planning. This may involve the hiring of a professional consultant to provide in-depth advice on options and to prepare farm development plans.

RECOMMENDATION #2

CHANGE THE WAY AGRICULTURAL LEASES ARE ISSUED

Agricultural leases should be allocated in response to individual lease applications. Open public auctions should be discontinued. "Limited-entry" auctions among existing farmers should be used where, as a result of advertisement of an individual application, other qualified parties come forward with an interest in the advertised parcel.

Where the Ministry of Crown Lands refuses an agricultural lease application, there should be a clear and time-limited process for reviewing that decision, as follows:

As a first stage, the review process should involve the use of an independent professional consultant to make a recommendation to the Ministry of Crown Lands on the merits of the application. A fee of $500 should be required to initiate this process. Half of the fee should be rebated to the applicant if the consultant's review results in a lease being issued. There should be no rebate if the review does not result in a lease;

As a second stage, if the applicant wishes to pursue the matter further, there should be opportunity for appeal to an independent third party for a binding decision. Policy and procedures should be developed on eligibility to appeal, and to define how the appeal process would work.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The recommendations for independent review and appeal of agricultural lease applications is an attempt to bring greater structure and certainty to the Crown land allocation process. Many past applicants have complained of a lengthy and unfair process. The recommended measures should greatly alleviate these concerns.

Proposed Policy and Actions

These recommendations will be incorporated into a detailed statement of policy and procedures for implementation in the Summer of 1990. Input from the agricultural industry and other government agencies is being sought in the development of detailed policy.

RECOMMENDATION #3

INCREASE THE PRICE OF TIMBER ON AGRICULTURAL LEASES

Government should change the amount charged for Crown timber on agricultural leases, as follows:

The Province should ensure that all merchantable timber that is removed from agricultural leases is priced at current market value levels;

The approach the Province should adopt in applying market value pricing for merchantable timber on agricultural leases is to calculate stumpage at the Comparative Value Pricing (CVP) rate as an "upset" amount, plus the current premiums that are bid for timber in the local area under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program; and

Leaseholders that qualify to purchase their leases should continue to be able to defer the payment of stumpage on standing merchantable timber until it is actually logged. Government methods to monitor and enforce this practice should be investigated to confirm their adequacy.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Gillespie states that excessive profit potentials on timbered agricultural leases will continue to stimulate a non-agricultural demand for agricultural leases.

The government believes timber prices on agricultural leases should be set by the Ministry of Forests in a manner that is fair compared with the prices established for other Crown timber. Pricing should reflect the differences in the terms and conditions attached to the timber rights. CVP stumpage rates achieve these objectives.

Bonus bids under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program reflect the value of a specific stand of timber at a specific point in time. It would be arbitrary and unfair to use these bids to price different timber stands at a later time.

Also, timber removal under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program normally occurs right after the timber rights are issued, whereas timber removal on agricultural leases can span many years. Pricing under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program is not easily adapted to other situations.

On the question of stumpage deferral, government supports the recommendation to continue to permit leaseholders to defer the payment of stumpage when they purchase their lease lands.

Proposed Policy and Actions

The Ministry of Forests will continue to price timber on agricultural leases using Comparative Value Pricing.

The Ministry of Forests will continue to offer to have agricultural lease areas logged under the Small Business Forest Enterprise Program, with suitable contractual conditions to ensure that agricultural development potential is not impaired.

After September 30, 1990, if the term of an existing agricultural lease "licence to cut" is extended and CVP rates are not yet in place because of initial contract limitations, the stumpage rates for that licence will be re-determined according to the CVP policies and procedures.

All logging operations shall conform to approved logging plans and will require a timber mark, issued by the Ministry of Forests.

RECOMMENDATION #4

CHANGE THE WAY LEASE DEVELOPMENT IS ENFORCED

The current policy of limiting the rate of lease development to 80 acres at a time should be discontinued and replaced with the use of a lease development plan which specifies the timing of lease development. The lease development plan should be the basis upon which lease performance is monitored and evaluated.

The Ministry of Crown Lands should monitor the results of the revised policy, and within 2 - 3 years, evaluate whether or not the policies of limiting program access to existing farmers and the use of development plans are, in themselves, ensuring sound performance on leases. If they are not, the Ministry should reinstate a policy of incremental access to timber, or alternatively, "hold back" a portion of timber profits until the required development has occurred.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The existing government policy of controlling the rate of lease development is aimed at preventing "log and run" practices, while maximizing the amount of bona fide agricultural development. Restricting the program to bona fide farmers, and using lease development plans, can replace the existing costly and time consuming methods of controlling lease development. The government supports the reduction of administration costs, as long as the policy effectively achieves its aims.

Proposed Policy and Actions

The government endorses these recommendations for new leases. Logging on existing leases will continue to be limited to 80 acres at a time.

The Ministry of Crown Lands will coordinate the preparation of a standardized outline and format for agricultural lease development plans. Each new lease will be required to have a development plan in place specifying the rate and methods of lease development. Lease performance will be evaluated and enforced according to development plan requirements.

The Ministry of Crown Lands will monitor the revised agricultural lease program to determine whether or not subsequent policy changes are needed to ensure the proper development of agricultural leases.

RECOMMENDATION #5

CHANGE LEASE RENTAL AND PURCHASE PRICE ARRANGEMENTS

Changes in the method of determining annual lease rent payments and the purchase price of agricultural leases should be introduced, as follows:

Annual rents for agricultural leases should be based, for the full ten year lease term, on the appraised market value of the land as established at the time the lease is issued;

The percentage rate that is used to calculate annual rent payments should be the same as for the rental of private agricultural land. The Ministry of Crown Lands should review private agricultural land rental arrangements to determine the appropriate rent rate that should apply to future leases. This rate should be reviewed periodically by the Ministry (five year intervals) to ensure market-place comparability. Future agricultural leases should be subject to a review of the rent rate at lease mid-term, to enable the introduction of an updated rent rate into the lease agreement;

The existing Ministry of Crown Lands' policy of using rent increases at lease mid-term to motivate lease development should be discontinued for new leases. The rate of lease development should be scheduled in the lease development plan;

The existing Ministry of Crown Lands' policy of selling agricultural leases at the lesser of the original or the current market value of the land should be discontinued for new leases. Purchase price should be set at the market value of the parcel as appraised at the time that the lease was issued.

The Ministry of Crown Lands should use only qualified, accredited appraisers to establish the market value of Crown land allocated under the program; and

The Ministry of Crown Lands' existing policy of deducting a $750 per hectare cultivation credit from the purchase price of agricultural lease lands should be discontinued, (except for all existing lease commitments, which should be honoured). Cultivation incentives for agricultural land in B.C. should be delivered through programs of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, notably through the existing Agricultural Land Development Assistance (ALDA) Program. Government must consciously decide the extent to which it wishes to subsidize cultivation on new Crown agricultural leases as compared with cultivation subsidies to existing farmlands. The priority should be to spend these funds on intensifying the use of existing farmland. The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries should set policy on the extent to which Crown agricultural lease lands will be subsidized under their cultivation incentive programs.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

The recommendations regarding annual rentals are designed to give leaseholders greater certainty on their holding costs, and ensure that annual rent rates are more closely linked to market value rates. The recommendations to consistently use independent appraisal professionals, and to fix the purchase price of the land at the time of lease issuance, will bring greater objectivity to the allocation process. The government finds merit in these proposals and supports them.

The government also supports the recommendation to eliminate the current cultivation credit policy. This policy was initiated in 1986 to offset increasing lease development costs. Experience in implementing cultivation credits, however, has revealed some serious questions about the effectiveness of the policy, effects on equity and fairness among leaseholders, and the overall lack of cost-benefit justification.

The existing agricultural land development incentive program operated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (i.e. the ALDA Program) is considered to be the most appropriate government vehicle to support farmland improvement in British Columbia.

Proposed Policy and Actions

The Ministry of Crown Lands will review prevailing agricultural lease rent rates that are applied in comparable situations on private agricultural lands. The resulting rent rate policy will be applied to all new agricultural leases.

All future land appraisals to determine market value for agricultural lease lands will be conducted by independent, professional, accredited appraisers.

The policy of reducing the purchase price of agricultural leases by applying cultivation credits will be discontinued for all new leases. The policy will be retained for all existing leases, as per the provisions of those existing lease agreements.

The Agricultural Land Development Assistance Program (ALDA) of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries will continue to be available to qualified agricultural Crown lease applicants to support the development of viable farm units through the provision of low interest loans for land clearing.

RECOMMENDATION #6

IMPROVE THE BASIS FOR MAKING CROWN LAND ALLOCATION DECISIONS

The inter-agency process for making decisions on specific agricultural lease applications needs to be improved. The Ministry of Crown Lands and other resource management agencies should explore and adopt methods to improve communication and cooperation.

Crown lands that have been identified through former planning studies as suitable for agricultural development (i.e. "Agricultural Development Areas") should not be marketed at this time. These lands should be retained as uncommitted Crown land until there is sufficient justification to allocate them for agriculture, or until they are designated for a different purpose through an inter-agency and public planning exercise. These lands should, however, be available for existing farm expansion, consistent with the criteria that are adopted to determine eligibility for expansion.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Mr. Gillespie has found that there is room to improve cooperation and coordination among the government agencies involved in the Crown land allocation process. The proposed policies and actions in this Discussion Paper, aimed at ensuring a higher standard of Crown land management, will help reduce these concerns. Specific efforts to adopt more cooperative and consultative approaches among agencies will also assist in an improved decision-making environment.

Regarding those areas of Crown land that have been designated through previous planning processes for agricultural marketing and development, the government supports Mr. Gillespie's recommendation that the Crown should retain these lands. Except for proposals from qualified applicants for existing farm expansion, these lands will remain as uncommitted Crown lands, until such time as there is solid justification to allocate them.

Proposed Policy and Actions

These recommendations will be implemented in the Summer of 1990.

RECOMMENDATION #7

AMEND THE LAND ACT TO IMPROVE GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO ENFORCE LEASE REQUIREMENTS

The **Land Act** should be amended to establish that non-compliance with land management provisions of leases is an "offense", and appropriate penalties should be established.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

This recommendation is a reaction to the difficulty sometimes faced by government in enforcing the provisions of leases. Presently, the worst possible penalty for improper use of Crown lease land is cancellation of the lease and return of the land to the government. The weakness of this arrangement is that the "damage" to the land will have occurred by the time the lease is cancelled.

The policy changes to restrict the program to existing farmers will largely address this issue. However, the Ministry of Crown Lands should also have the authority to fine an individual that abuses public land in violation of land management requirements stated in the lease agreement.

Proposed Policy and Actions

The government accepts that there should be a stronger basis for enforcing proper land management on Crown leases. A proposal will be initiated to amend the **Land Act** to make non-compliance with management requirements an offense. The proposal will apply to both existing and new leases.

RECOMMENDATION #8

HONOUR AND ENFORCE EXISTING LEASE AGREEMENTS

The Ministry of Crown Lands should continue to administer existing agricultural leases in compliance with the terms contained in the leases.

There should be no further opportunities provided to tenure holders to convert their leases to new agreements containing different tenure provisions.

Where tenure holders fail to comply with the terms of their leases, the Ministry of Crown Lands should be firm in enforcing the lease agreements. Specifically, leases should be terminated, according to the stated lease provisions for termination, where the lease term expires and the required cultivation is not completed.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

These recommendations are made in light of government's responsibilities to continue to administer the existing 1370 agricultural leases on Crown land. In the past, the Ministry of Crown Lands has generally permitted the conversion and extension of leases. This has resulted in concerns about unfair and inconsistent treatment of leaseholders.

The specific rights and obligations of each leaseholder are spelled out in the lease agreement. To ensure complete fairness, all existing leases will be honoured and strictly enforced according to their legal provisions. This includes monitoring of provincial requirements associated with timber removal from existing leases.

Proposed Policy and Actions

The Ministry of Crown Lands will administer all existing leases in compliance with the provisions of those agreements.

CONCLUSIONS

Future Directions

The government strongly supports the "Crown Land Management Principles" described in Appendix II as the basis for allocating and managing public lands in British Columbia. In adopting the proposed policies and actions outlined in this Discussion Paper, the agricultural lease program will more closely parallel these principles.

It is recognized that implementation of these policies will substantially reduce the future amount of Crown land that will be provided through agricultural leases, compared to past allocation rates. There will, however, be assurances that those Crown lands that are allocated will be productively used for agricultural purposes.

The proposals will contribute to the creation of viable farm units that can operate successfully in the agricultural market place. They will also ensure greater accountability, fairness, and consistency in the future allocation of agricultural Crown lands.

LOCATIONS OF MINISTRY OF CROWN LANDS

REGIONAL OFFICES

VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION
851 Yates Street
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 1X5

Telephone: 387-5011

LOWER MAINLAND REGION
401, 4603 Kingsway
Burnaby, B.C.
V5H 4M4

Telephone: 660-5500

THOMPSON-OKANAGAN REGION
478 St. Paul Street
Kamloops, B.C.
V2B 3G6

Telephone: 828-4800

KOOTENAY REGION
828A Baker Street
Cranbrook, B.C.
V1C 1A2

Telephone: 426-1414

CARIBOO REGION
172 North 2nd Avenue
Williams Lake, B.C.
V2G 1Z6

Telephone: 398-4250

SKEENA REGION
3793 Alfred Avenue
Smithers, B.C.
V0J 2N0

Telephone: 847-7334

OMINECA REGION
308, 1011 - 4th Avenue
Prince George, B.C.
V2L 3H9

Telephone: 565-6245

PEACE REGION
220, 9900-100 Avenue
Fort St. John, B.C.
V1J 5S7

Telephone: 787-3411

APPENDIX II

CROWN LAND MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

1. **Ensure that Crown land allocation is based on an assessment of the most suitable use of the land.**

2. **Avoid or minimize conflict and incompatibility in the allocation of Crown land.**

3. **Allocate Crown land in a manner that contributes to sustainable economic development.**

4. **Ensure that Crown land is used efficiently and effectively.**

5. **Allocate Crown land in compliance into the goal of maintaining high environmental quality and integrity.**

6. **Carefully conserve and manage aquatic Crown lands.**

7. **Cooperate and coordinate with government agencies, interest groups, and the public in the management of Crown land.**

8. **Allocate and manage Crown lands fairly and equitably.**

9. **Obtain a fair return to the public for the allocation of Crown land.**

The above principles are taken from a Ministry of Crown Lands publication entitled, "Crown Land Administration Principles, Victoria, 1989."